

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A computer-assisted method of operating a content provider in a customer relationship management (CRM) system, the method including:
 - 5 mapping first content to concept nodes of an automated CRM first content provider hosted by a first entity;
 - initiating a user session with the first content provider;
 - receiving from the user a user query pertaining to the user's needs;
 - carrying out a user-provider dialog between the user and the first content
 - 10 provider to confirm that a concept node is likely relevant to the user's needs, the confirmed concept node including a calling link to a second content provider hosted by a second entity, different from the first entity, and the second content provider including second content managed substantially independently from the first content of the first content provider; and
 - 15 calling the second content provider to retrieve that portion of the second content, if any, that is deemed likely relevant to the user's needs.
2. The method of claim 1, in which the first and second entities are respective different first and second business enterprises.
- 20 3. The method of claim 2, in which the first business enterprise includes an affinity enterprise that the user typically associates with a whole product.
4. The method of claim 3, in which the second business enterprise includes a
- 25 secondary enterprise that provides a component of the whole product.
5. The method of claim 2, in which the first business enterprise includes a value-adder to a product.
- 30 6. The method of claim 5, in which the second business enterprise includes a provider of the whole product.

7. The method of claim 1, in which the mapping first content to concept nodes includes autocontextualizing documents to the concept nodes.
- 5 8. The method of claim 1, in which the mapping first content to concept nodes includes mapping first content to concept nodes organized in multiple different taxonomies.
9. The method of claim 8, in which the mapping first content to concept nodes
10 includes mapping first content to concept nodes organized in multiple different taxonomies, each taxonomy including a directed acyclical graph (DAG).
10. The method of claim 1, in which initiating a user session with the first content provider includes receiving a web site visit from the user.
- 15 11. The method of claim 1, further including mapping second content to concept nodes of the second content provider hosted by the second entity.
12. The method of claim 11, in which the mapping second content includes
20 autocontextualizing second content to concept nodes of the second content provider hosted by the second entity.
13. The method of claim 1, further including carrying out a user-provider dialog between the user and the second content provider to confirm that a concept node of
25 the second content provider is likely relevant to the user query.
14. The method of claim 13, further including returning content, which is likely relevant to the user query, from the second content provider to at least one of the first content provider and the user.

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15. The method of claim 1, in which calling the second content provider includes calling at least one of:
- a dialog-driven concept-organized second content provider;
 - a web site second content provider;
 - 5 a web service second content provider;
 - a search engine second content provider;
 - a discussion thread second content provider; and
 - an interface for interacting with a customer service representative.
- 10 16. A computer-readable medium including instructions for carrying out the method of claim 1.
17. A computer-assisted method of operating a content provider in a customer relationship management (CRM) system, the method including:
- 15 initiating a user session with a first content provider associated with a first entity;
- calling a concept-organized second content provider hosted by a second entity, different from the first entity, and including second content managed substantially independently from any first content of the first entity;
 - 20 carrying out a user-provider session between the user and the second content provider; and
 - returning, to the user, content from the second content provider that is deemed likely relevant to the user's needs.
- 25 18. The method of claim 17, further including returning, to the user, content from the first content provider that is deemed likely relevant to the user's needs.
19. The method of claim 18, further including integrating the content from the first content provider with the content from the second content provider for
- 30 returning integrated content to the user.

20. The method of claim 17, further including reporting to the first entity information about the first entity's usage of the second content provider.
21. The method of claim 20, further including reporting to the first entity
5 benchmarking information about other entities', which are different from the first entity, usage of the second content provider.
22. The method of claim 17, in which returning, to the user, content from the second content provider includes branding the content from the second content
10 provider, at least in part, using branding associated with the first entity.
23. The method of claim 17, in which the carrying out the user-provider session between the user and the second content provider includes basing the session at least in part on at least one attribute associated with the first entity.
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24. The method of claim 23, in which the basing the session at least in part on at least one attribute associated with the first entity includes accessing only a portion of the second content that is defined by the attribute as being relevant to the first entity.
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25. The method of claim 17, in which the first and second entities are respective different first and second business enterprises.
26. The method of claim 25, in which the first business enterprise includes an
25 affinity enterprise that the user typically associates with a whole product.
27. The method of claim 26, in which the second business enterprise includes a secondary enterprise that vends a component of the whole product.
- 30 28. The method of claim 25, in which the first business enterprise includes a value-adder to a product.

29. The method of claim 28, in which the second business enterprise includes a provider of the whole product.
- 5 30. The method of claim 17, further including mapping second content to concept nodes associated with the second content provider.
31. The method of claim 30, in which the mapping includes autocontextualizing documents to the concept nodes associated with the second content provider.
- 10 32. The method of claim 30, in which the mapping includes mapping second content to concept nodes, associated with the second content provider, that are organized in multiple different taxonomies.
- 15 33. The method of claim 30, in which the mapping includes mapping second content to concept nodes, associated with the second content provider, that are organized in multiple different taxonomies, each taxonomy including a directed acyclical graph (DAG).
- 20 34. The method of claim 17, in which initiating a user session with the first entity includes receiving a web site visit from the user.
35. The method of claim 17, in which initiating a user session with the first entity includes receiving a telephone call from the user.
- 25 36. A computer-readable medium including instructions for carrying out the method of claim 17.
37. A first content provider, including:
- 30 a user interface to receive a user query pertaining to the user's needs;
first concept nodes and first content mapped to the first concept nodes; and

a communication interface to communicate with a second content provider of second content that is managed substantially independently from the first content, the communication interface including a calling link, to the second content provider, the calling link associated with at least one exit node of the first concept nodes.

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38. The first content provider of claim 37, in which the communication interface includes at least one entry node of the first concept nodes, the entry node configured for being called by the second content provider.

10 **39.** The first content provider of claim 37, further including an autocontextualization engine to map the first content to the first concept nodes.

40. The first content provider of claim 37, further including a dialog engine configured to carry on a dialog with the user to focus a search for first content
15 pertaining to the user's needs to a particular subset of the first concept nodes.

41. The first content provider of claim 37, in which the first concept nodes are organized into a first knowledge map of multiple different taxonomies.

20 **42.** The first content provider of claim 41, in which the multiple different taxonomies include directed acyclical graphs (DAGs).

43. The first content provider of claim 37, in which the calling link is configured to connect over a network to a dialog-driven concept-organized second content
25 provider.

44. The first content provider of claim 35, in which the calling link is configured to connect over a network to content of a web site of the second content provider.

30 **45.** The first content provider of claim 37, in which the calling link is configured to connect over a network to a service of a web site of the second content provider.

46. The first content provider of claim 37, in which the calling link is configured to connect over a network to a text search engine of the second content provider.
- 5 47. The first content provider of claim 37, in which the calling link is configured to connect over a network to a discussion thread of the second content provider.
48. The first content provider of claim 37, in which the calling link is configured to connect over a network to an interface for interacting with a customer service
10 representative.
49. The first content provider of claim 37, in which the first and second content providers are respectively associated with different first and second entities.
- 15 50. The first content provider of claim 49, in which the first and second entities are respective different first and second business enterprises.
51. A customer relationship management (CRM) content provider system including:
20 first and second content providers, the first content provider including:
a user interface to receive a user query pertaining to the user's needs;
a first knowledge map including first concept nodes and first content mapped to the first concept nodes;
a first dialog engine coupled to the user interface and the first
25 knowledge map, to carry out a dialog with the user to restrict a search for content pertaining to the user's needs to at least one particular subset of the first concept nodes;
a first communication interface to communicate with the second content provider, the first communication interface including at least one
30 exit first concept node that calls the second content provider;
and the second content provider including:

a second communication interface to communicate with the first content provider, the second communication interface including at least one entry second concept node configured for being called by the first content provider;

5 a second knowledge map including second concept nodes and second content mapped to the second concept nodes; and

a second dialog engine coupled to the user interface and the first knowledge map, to carry out a dialog with the user to restrict a search for content pertaining to the user's needs to at least one particular subset of the
10 second concept nodes.

52. The system of claim 51, in which the first content provider includes a first autocontextualization engine to map the first content to the first concept nodes, and in which the second content provider includes a second autocontextualization engine
15 to map the second content to the second concept nodes.

53. The system of claim 51, in which the first concept nodes are organized into multiple different first taxonomies, and the second concept nodes are organized into multiple different second taxonomies.

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54. The system of claim 51, in which at least one of the taxonomies includes a directed acyclical graph.

55. A computer-assisted method of operating a content provider in a customer relationship management (CRM) system, the method including:

25 mapping first content to first concept nodes of an automated CRM first content provider hosted by a first entity;

initiating a user session with the first content provider;

receiving from the user a user query pertaining to the user's needs;

30 carrying out a user-provider dialog between the user and the first content provider to determine which concept nodes pertain to the user's needs; and

escalating the user session to an interface for interacting with a human customer service representative associated with a second entity, different from the first entity.

5 **56.** The method of claim 55, in which the first and second entities are respective different first and second business enterprises.

57. The method of claim 56, in which the first business enterprise includes an affinity enterprise that the user typically associates with a whole product.

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58. The method of claim 57, in which the second business enterprise includes a secondary enterprise that provides a component of the whole product.

59. The method of claim 56, in which the first business enterprise includes a
15 value-adder to a product.

60. The method of claim 59, in which the second business enterprise includes a provider of the whole product.

20 **61.** A computer-readable medium including instructions for carrying out the method of claim 55.

62. A computer-assisted method of operating a content provider in a customer relationship management (CRM) system, the method including:

25 mapping second content to second concept nodes of an automated CRM second content provider hosted by a second entity;

 receiving from a user, at a telephonic interface for interacting with a human customer service representative associated with a first entity, a telephone user query pertaining to the user's needs;

initiating a user session with the second content provider using a subset of the second concept nodes determined based on the user's session with the interface for interacting with the customer service representative; and

carrying out a user-provider dialog between the user and the second content
 5 provider to further guide the user to a portion of the second content that is deemed likely relevant to the user's needs.

63. The method of claim 62, in which the first and second entities are respective different first and second business enterprises.

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64. The method of claim 63, in which the first business enterprise includes an affinity enterprise that the user typically associates with a whole product.

65. The method of claim 64, in which the second business enterprise includes a
 15 secondary enterprise that provides a component of the whole product.

66. The method of claim 64, in which the first business enterprise includes a value-adder to a whole product.

20 67. The method of claim 66, in which the second business enterprise includes a provider of the whole product.

68. A computer-readable medium including instructions for carrying out the method of claim 62.

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69. A computer-assisted method of operating a content provider in a customer relationship management (CRM) system, the method including:

mapping, to first concept nodes of an automated concept-organized CRM first content provider hosted by a first entity, first content hosted by the first content
 30 provider;

initiating a user session with the first content provider via a portal hosted by a second entity that is different from the first entity;

receiving at the portal, over an intranet hosted by the second entity, a user query pertaining to the user's needs, and communicating the user query to the first
5 content provider along with session context identifying the user as being associated with the second entity;

carrying out a user-provider session between the user and the first content provider to determine whether any first concept node is likely relevant to the user's needs; and

10 returning to the user an indication of first content associated with a first concept node deemed relevant to the user's needs.

70. The method of claim **69**, further including escalating, if an escalation request is received from the user, the user session to an interface for interacting with a
15 human customer service representative.

71. The method of claim **70**, in which escalating the user session is to an interface for interacting with a human customer service representative associated with the first entity.
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72. The method of claim **70**, in which escalating the user session is to an interface for interacting with a human customer service representative associated with the second entity.

25 **73.** The method of claim **70**, in which escalating includes initiating a service incident report (SIR).

74. The method of claim **73**, further including transferring to the SIR information obtained from session context from the user session.
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75. The method of claim 73, further including communicating to the user a web link to view the SIR.

76. The method of claim 69, further including providing an indication of content at the portal based at least in part on previous user sessions of users associated with the second entity.

77. The method of claim 69, further including mapping, to first concept nodes of an automated concept-organized CRM first content provider hosted by a first entity, second content hosted by the portal associated with the second entity.

78. The method of claim 69, further including returning to the user an indication of second content associated with a first concept node deemed relevant to the user's needs.

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79. A computer-readable medium including instructions for carrying out the method of claim 69.